United Nations A/56/656

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 November 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 32
Multilingualism

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is being submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/64 of 6 December 1999, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-sixth session a comprehensive report on the implementation of resolutions 50/11 of 2 November 1995 and 54/64.

Framework of multilingualism

2. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are both official and working languages of the General Assembly, its committees, subcommittees and subsidiary organs,[1] and of the Security Council;[2] Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages and English, French and Spanish the working languages of the Economic and Social Council[3] and its functional commissions; Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages and English and French the working languages of the Trusteeship Council;[4] English and French are the official languages of the International Court of Justice;[5] and English and French are the working languages of the Secretariat.[6]

3. The working languages of the regional commissions of the United Nations are as follows: Arabic, English and French for the Economic Commission for Africa; English, French and Russian for the Economic Commission for Europe; English, French and Spanish for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;[7] Chinese, English, French and Russian for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; and Arabic, English and French for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

Appointment of a coordinator of questions relating to multilingualism

4. In its resolution 54/64 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to appoint a senior Secretariat official as coordinator of questions relating to multilingualism throughout the Secretariat. Pursuant to that request, the Secretary-General appointed on 6 September 2000 Federico Riesco, Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, as Coordinator for Multilingualism. Upon the latter's retirement, the Secretary-General appointed to that function Miles Stoby, Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, with effect from 6 September 2001.

5. On the basis of General Assembly resolution 54/64, it is understood that this official will seek to coordinate action and propose strategies to address the weaknesses in the pattern of language use in the Organization identified in resolution 50/11, and serve as the focal point for questions and proposals

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pertaining to multilingualism throughout the Secretariat.

6. Appreciating that, to be effective, efforts to promote multilingualism must be Secretariat-wide, the Coordinator has sought to involve all departments and/or offices of the Secretariat. To this end, he invited the heads of all departments and offices in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi to appoint departmental focal points for questions relating to multilingualism. The focal points and the Coordinator have conferred regularly on ways and means to reinforce multilingualism, and on issues requiring action at the Secretariat level. The Coordinator has also participated in a number of meetings with Member States on this matter, including meetings of the Committee on Conferences, informal consultations of the Fifth Committee, and meetings of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions where these issues were addressed.

7. As a result of interdepartmental consultations and consultations in the context of the above-mentioned bodies, three sets of issues were identified in relation to multilingualism, namely, (a) issues relating to the working languages of the Secretariat; (b) issues relating to the use of official languages in documents and meetings; and (c) issues relating to public information. These issues are addressed below.

II. Issues relating to the working languages of the Secretariat

8. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 50/11, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that appointment of the staff of the Organization was carried out strictly in accordance with the terms of Article 101 of the Charter and the regulations established by the General Assembly pursuant to that Article and that, upon recruitment, personnel recruited by the different bodies of the Organization had a command of and used at least one of the working languages of the Secretariat or one of the working languages of another body of the Organization, in the case of staff members who were to work for that body and whose tenure of appointment did not exceed two years, and requested him to ensure that the use of another of the six official languages was duly encouraged and taken into account, particularly when promotions and incremental steps were under consideration, in order to ensure linguistic balance within the Organization.

9. While there is at this time no legislative requirement for the staff, or prospective staff, of the Secretariat to have proficiency in both working languages of the Secretariat, or in all the working languages of the regional commissions, as applicable, the Secretary-General has actively sought to promote, to the extent feasible and within available resources, a more balanced use of all the working languages.

10. Consultations have highlighted the influence of the language of the host city whenever it is a working language. Thus the English language largely prevails within the Secretariat at Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Office at Nairobi, whereas other languages, such as French, Spanish and Arabic, are widely used, and may even prevail, in the day-to-day work of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at Santiago, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at Beirut, respectively. English is also the language favoured for working purposes at the United Nations Office at Vienna.

Vacancy announcements and recruitments

11. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 50/11 and to further the use of all working languages and increase the percentage of French-speaking staff, the Office of Human Resources Management has, as an integral part of the human resources reform programme put in place by the Secretary-General, initiated a project to overhaul the recruitment system of the Secretariat.

12. The project, known as the Galaxy Project, provides for a Secretariat-wide system that would partially automate the generation of vacancy announcements by extracting key requirements, including language proficiency requirements, from an electronic library of generic job profiles. The system would also automate the preliminary screening of applications by introducing standardized electronic application forms with a finite number of pre-defined options for providing each item of information required. By linking completed electronic application forms with the standardized vacancy announcements, it

will be possible to determine automatically whether information provided by applicants matches key requirements specified in the vacancy announcement. Using web-based technology, the system will allow simultaneous posting of vacancy announcements at all duty stations and, for external vacancy announcements, on the United Nations web site.

13. It is expected that the implementation of the Galaxy Project will yield, inter alia, a higher number of French-speaking staff members, and allow greater weight to be given to language skills in recruitment and promotion criteria.

Action

14. The Secretariat will seek to ensure that the Galaxy Project, currently in a developmental phase, becomes operational in the second quarter of 2002.

Language incentives

15. Staff members are strongly encouraged to become proficient in two or more of the official languages of the United Nations in order to further multilingualism within the Secretariat in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/11.

16. In an effort to promote multilingualism throughout the Secretariat, staff members appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules to posts in the General Service, Security Service, Trades and Crafts, or Field Service categories, up to and including level 5, are paid a language allowance in accordance with staff rule 103.6 after they have established proficiency in at least two official languages.

17. In addition, staff members appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules to posts in the Professional category and higher and who are subject to the system of desirable ranges by nationality are eligible for accelerated increments after they have established proficiency in a second working or official language. Subject to satisfactory service, staff members who have fulfilled the linguistic requirements for accelerated increments are granted the salary increments after 10 months, whereas the normal qualifying period for an in-grade increment is 12 months of continuous service,[8] and after 20 months for grades and levels for which the normal qualifying period for the increment is 24 months.[9]

Action

18. Administrative arrangements in place for the provision of language allowances and accelerated salary increments will continue to be enforced.

Language training

19. With reference to paragraph 7 of resolution 50/11, it is worth recalling that the administrative instruction on language proficiency and language incentives (ST/AI/1999/2) of 13 May 1999 strongly encourages staff members to become proficient in two or more of the official languages of the United Nations in order to further the aims of multilingualism in the Organization.

20. Language programmes at major duty stations provide beginner, intermediate and advanced courses in the six official languages. To supplement the regular language courses, special courses are offered. These courses, in such specific areas as "Stratégies d'écoute: comprendre pour mieux communiquer", "English through media", "Spanish at the cinema", "Media-assisted Russian", "Cultural diversity of the Arabic-speaking world" and "Reading Chinese newspapers", give staff the means to broaden and strengthen their knowledge of current events and culture so that they can put their acquired skills to use in their work for the Organization. In addition, in order to develop the ability of staff members to communicate orally and in writing, courses are offered in giving oral presentations, improving pronunciation, drafting letters and memoranda and writing reports.

21. Self-study centres at major duty stations support the learning of languages by providing staff members with a variety of means, such as print, audio, video, computers and multimedia, to study at their own pace and according to their own schedules. Moreover, resources available on the Internet are incorporated into the language classes and hyperlinks to language-learning sites continue to be developed for the Intranet.

22. The core language-training programme at Headquarters provides beginner, intermediate and advanced courses in the six official languages during three 13-week terms each year. Special courses with a focus on development of a particular skill, such as conversation, reading, writing or aural comprehension, are also scheduled to meet the linguistic needs of participants, who include staff of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United

Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as staff of the permanent missions.

23. In 1999, staff of 119 permanent missions availed themselves of the language-training programme; in 2000, the number was 109. In 2000, a total of 3,225 individuals enrolled in language courses, as follows: 279 in Arabic, 170 in Chinese, 585 in English, 1,185 in French, 218 in Russian and 788 in Spanish.

24. Language training is provided by the United Nations Office at Vienna in all the official languages as well as German. In 2000, 314 individuals enrolled in language courses, as follows: 52 in Arabic, 33 in Chinese, 44 in English, 75 in French, 38 in Russian and 72 in Spanish. The total number of individuals having availed themselves of the language training programmes at the United Nations Office at Vienna in 2001 was 39 , as follows: 56 in Arabic, 10 in Chinese, 64 in English, 73 in French, 26 in Russian and 162 in Spanish.

25. Supplementing the regular language courses, special courses were offered in effective English writing, French conversation, Chinese conversation and English writing skills for the staff at large.

26. In addition, specialized language courses in terminology were offered to language staff for the following subjects: drug control (Austria); Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Austria); comparative law (France and Austria); international trade law (Austria); and criminal justice (Austria). Spanish immersion courses were also offered in Spain in 2001.

27. The Secretariat remains committed to ensuring that adequate human and financial resources are made available to provide the appropriate language courses as reflected in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 and in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/55/253 and Corr.1), language and communications programmes to promote multilingualism are cited as targeted programmes to address priority needs of the Organization.

Actions

28. The Secretariat will continue to actively encourage staff members to acquire new languages or enhance their proficiency in the official languages of the Organization.

29. Secretariat officials appearing before intergovernmental or expert bodies will be encouraged, when they address meetings with interpretation services, to use official languages other than English whenever possible.

III. Issues relating to the use of official languages in documents and meetings

Documents

30. By its resolution 36/117 B of 10 December 1981, the General Assembly established the rule regarding the simultaneous distribution of documents in all the official languages. This rule, which mandates that no language version of a particular document, including its original language version, may be released for distribution until all the other required language versions are available, was reiterated in resolutions 42/207 C of 11 December 1987, 50/11 of 2 November 1995 and 53/208 B of 18 December 1998.

31. The Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, which is responsible for the issuance of all documents, has consistently sought to adhere to the above-mentioned rule to the extent that the issuance of the document fell under its purview.[10] Standard arrangements governing the simultaneous distribution of documents have at times not been strictly adhered to, however.

32. Consultations with the focal points on multilingualism have revealed that various author departments of the Secretariat and/or United Nations bodies provide, as a courtesy, advance copies of reports and other documents, at times in draft form, in hard copy or on the web site of the department or office. This courtesy is extended in response to informal requests by organs or committees of the United Nations or by individual delegations, and often in connection with the run-up to major intergovernmental meetings and conferences. These advance copies are almost invariably in English.

33. In some instances, the Secretariat provides advance courtesy copies of reports of the Secretary-General to the president of the organ or body concerned. Reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council are often made available to the President of the Council in the original language version, almost invariably in English, immediately

upon their approval by the Secretary-General; the President of the Security Council in turn makes them available to members of the Council, with a view to facilitating consultations with capitals prior to the consideration of the report, particularly when the matter is urgent.

Action

34. It is up to Member States to take a position on the pattern of ad hoc availability of courtesy draft or advance copies of documents.

Meetings

35. In paragraph 9 of resolution 50/11, the General Assembly urged the delegations of Member States and the Secretariat to endeavour to avoid holding informal meetings without interpretation.

36. Official calendar meetings[11] are conducted with simultaneous interpretation in the languages requested and informal calendar meetings are provided with conference services on an "as-available" basis. Complaints by a number of Member States regarding the high number of so-called "low-cost" informal meetings held without interpretation are to be considered in the context of the number of calendar meetings requested by Member States with and without interpretation at Headquarters, shown in table 1. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the trend towards meetings without interpretation of United Nations bodies based at the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna, respectively.

37. While the reasons for the increase in the number of intergovernmental meetings held without interpretation are manifold, it can be argued that this trend thwarts the overall aim of a multilingual Organization. It is to be stressed that the increase in the number of meetings held without interpretation is only partially motivated by cost considerations. It has been argued that such informal meetings without interpretation increase the efficiency of the intergovernmental deliberative process. Meetings without interpretation are customarily conducted in English at Headquarters, at the United Nations Office at Vienna and at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and in English or French at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

38. Draft resolutions are customarily proposed by Member States or groups of Member States, which try to build support either in informal consultations, sometimes held with interpretation, or in so-called "informal-informal" meetings, coordinated by a "lead" delegation or, sometimes, by a coordinator designated by the Bureau of the organ or body concerned. Draft resolutions are commonly first circulated as non-papers in the drafting language. When sufficient support has been gathered, the text, or an amended form thereof, is submitted for issuance in all the official languages as a limited-distribution document ("L" document). In general, the draft resolution is then formally introduced in the organ or body concerned. Informal negotiations may continue after the formal introduction of a draft resolution and, if the sponsor(s) so request, a subsequent version may be issued in the form of a revision to the initial "L" document.

39. Whenever amendments to a proposal, or competing texts, on a specific question are circulated, informal meetings or so-called "informal-informal" meetings are held in an attempt to reach a compromise. When no compromise is reached, the amendments or competing texts are also circulated formally under an "L" symbol in all the official languages.

40. The vast majority of informal texts (preliminary texts of draft resolutions) are in English and negotiations are customarily held on the basis of the English text.

41. There are no provisions requiring the Secretariat to provide translations in all the official languages of preliminary texts of draft resolutions. As initial proposals may generate numerous subsequent revised versions, systematic translations of unofficial drafts, while furthering the goal of multilingualism, might delay the negotiating process. Considering the intergovernmental nature of the negotiation process, the Secretariat will continue to provide the services Member States deem necessary to conduct their negotiations.

42. The discernible trend that has emerged with respect to informal meetings held without interpretation, in particular at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, and with respect to the negotiating process seem to suggest that the current working methods of intergovernmental organs and bodies of the Organization do not further the overall aim of multilingualism.

Action

43. The General Assembly may wish to address the question of the trend towards the holding of informal calendar meetings without interpretation.

Table 1
Calendar meetings held with and without interpretation at Headquarters
(Number of meetings)

	1994-1995	*1996-1997*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*	*2002-2003*
		Actual		*Estimated*	
With interpretation	6 470	6 081	5 763	6 300	6 300
Without interpretation	1 539	1 583	1 660	1 800	1 800
Total	**8 009**	**7 664**	**7 423**	**8 100**	**8 100**
Percentage of calendar meetings held without interpretation	**19.21**	**20.65**	**22.36**	**22.22**	**22.22**

Table 2
Calendar meetings held with and without interpretation at the United Nations Office at Geneva[a]
(Number of meetings)

	1994-1995	*1996-1997*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*	*2002-2003*
		Actual		*Estimated*	
With interpretation	5 482	4 954	4 586	4 850	4 850
Without interpretation	5 565	6 928	6 931	6 000	6 000
Total	**11 047**	**11 882**	**11 517**	**10 850**	**10 850**
Percentage of calendar meetings held without interpretation	**50.37**	**58.30**	**60.18**	**55.59**	**55.29**

[a] Including extrabudgetary meetings.

Table 3
United Nations meetings held with and without interpretation at the United Nations Office at Vienna
(Number of meetings)

	1994-1995	*1996-1997*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*	*2002-2003*
		Actual		*Estimated*	
With interpretation	805	686	837	860	900
Without interpretation	1 130	1 893	2 147	2 452	2 952
Total	**1 935**	**2 579**	**2 984**	**3 312**	**3 852**
Percentage of calendar meetings held without interpretation	**58.39**	**73.40**	**71.95**	**74.03**	**76.63**

Official Document System[12]

44. The Official Document System (ODS), which is a re-engineered version of its precursor, the Optical Disk System, is the official repository and distribution outlet of electronic versions of United Nations documents and will operate in strict compliance with the simultaneous distribution rule.

45. Electronic versions of documents become available through ODS at the same time in all languages, immediately following the issuance of the hard-copy version of the document.

Action

46. Phase II of the ODS project will be implemented by January 2002; it will permit full multilingual support functions, including searching capabilities in all the official languages.

47. An Internet-based *Journal* for Headquarters is to be developed, providing hyperlinks to and download options for United Nations documents cited in the *Journal*; this project is to be implemented early in 2002.

IV. Issues relating to public information

48. In accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 50/11, the Department of Public Information has continued during the biennium 2000-2001 to promote global awareness and better public understanding of the objectives and activities of the United Nations by producing and disseminating a broad range of information materials in all media in both the working and, to the extent possible, official languages of the Organization. It has also, inter alia, through the United Nations Information Centres, made information material available in numerous non-official languages. Increasingly, the print and audio-visual outputs of the Department are made available on the United Nations web site as well as in the traditional formats.

Web site

49. At present, the United Nations web site registers an average of 6 million daily visits, or so-called "hits", from more than 170 countries and territories. It features multimedia web pages, as well as live webcast coverage of the proceedings of the General Assembly and public meetings of the Security Council. Statements made during the general debate of the General Assembly and at major United Nations conferences are scanned and posted to the web site within minutes of their delivery.

50. Numerous General Assembly documents are available through the web site, as are major United Nations databases. For materials posted in English, hyperlinks to other available language versions are provided. Through the Official Document System, which is accessible through the Internet, official documents are available in all the official languages of issuance.

51. The United Nations web site also contains a wide variety of public information materials. These include hyperlinks to the sites maintained, inter alia, by 40 United Nations Information Centres/Services worldwide in Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish and 19 other languages (Armenian, Bangla, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Malagasy, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Swedish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu).

52. The Procurement Division of the Department of Management has included on its web site, in all the official languages, the brochure *Doing business with the United Nations*, which is widely used by vendors around the world as a working tool. The pointing of the cursor to the title of the brochure also activates a voice announcement in the chosen language. Moreover, the multilingual composition of the staff of that Division allows web enquiries to be replied to in all official languages.

53. While the Secretary-General is committed to multilingualism on the United Nations web site and has spared no effort in this respect, resource limitations have proved to be an impediment, which is compounded by the decentralized nature of the web site. Linguistic parity in terms of content, including databases, and of search and retrieval engines, would require adequate resources for the maintenance and enhancement of the site in all the official languages.

54. In this regard, the Department of Public Information was fortunate to receive the assistance of the Government of Spain and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which have each provided the services of a Junior Professional Officer

to assist in the work of the Spanish and French web sites, respectively. In addition, an agreement has been reached with two universities in Spain to provide translations of information materials, at no cost to the Organization, for posting on the United Nations web site. Similar assistance from other Member States or their national institutions could contribute to further development of sites in other official languages.

55. The question of the dissemination through the web site of all United Nations documents and information materials, with a view to achieving parity among the six official languages, is currently under review by the General Assembly.

Action

56. The Secretary-General will submit to the Committee on Information a revised proposal for achieving progress towards parity among the official languages on the United Nations web site, together with the associated resource requirements, for consideration by the Committee at its twenty-fourth session, in 2002.

Publications and other information material

57. United Nations press releases, which include coverage of meetings of intergovernmental bodies, United Nations events, speeches and statements of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and other senior officials, as well as compendia of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, are issued daily in New York and Geneva in English and French, and occasionally in Spanish. They are made available on the United Nations web site. The issuance and posting on the web site of press releases in all the official languages would require additional budgetary appropriations.

58. For its target audiences, which include the media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, government agencies and the private sector, the Department of Public Information researches, writes, publishes and distributes promotional and background print materials on the priority thematic issues of concern to the United Nations, and on special events. Depending on the availability of resources, these materials are produced in English, French and as many additional official languages as is feasible. The web site for the *UN Works* programme, a key tool in promoting the global strategy of the Organization and increasing support for its global mandates, will be available in all the official languages in 2002.

59. With the assistance of the worldwide network of United Nations Information Centres, information materials, including fact sheets, feature articles, background papers, press releases, posters, brochures and booklets, are often translated and adapted for use by local audiences in the country or countries falling under the purview of a particular Centre. During the reporting period, 57 United Nations Information Centres undertook translation of information materials into 63 languages. The Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Public Information promotes multilingualism in its daily work, and has recently upgraded its web site to post material in all six official languages.

60. The Department of Public Information is also striving to produce its recurrent publications in several official languages. The periodical *Africa Recovery* is issued in English and French, and its web pages are also available in both languages. *Development Business* is published in English, but contains procurement notices in French, Spanish and Portuguese, as appropriate. The same practice is followed on the *Development Business* web pages. Other publications issued regularly in several languages include *Basic Facts about the United Nations* and *Image & Reality* (English, French and Spanish) and *UN in Brief* (all six languages). These titles have also been issued in other languages, official and non-official, with the cooperation of United Nations Information Centres and outside publishers.

61. The *UN Chronicle* and its web pages are currently available in English and French. The Department is working to resume publication of its quarterly editions in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish in 2002. These had been suspended in 1995 as a result of the financial crisis of the Organization. In pursuing this effort, the *UN Chronicle* seeks to harmonize its role as a disseminator of information, opinion and debate on issues related to the United Nations with its subscription-oriented efforts as a sales publication. It encourages the reprint, and further dissemination, of its content in media across the world and in all languages for non-commercial purposes.

62. Through its Sales and Marketing Section, the Department of Public Information has been expanding its activities to promote the production and marketing of United Nations publications in all the official languages. Catalogues of new publications are regularly issued in English, French and Spanish. For the first time, catalogues have also been published in Arabic and Russian, in cooperation with regional sales agents. Multilingual promotions have also been expanded on the Internet.

63. The Department of Public Information has also sought to cooperate with international publishers to produce language versions of major publications. This approach has made possible the translation of numerous titles into Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish as well as other languages such as German, Japanese and Serbian. Finally, to encourage language training for both Secretariat and permanent mission staff, the United Nations Bookshop has for many years provided language study resources. It currently works with the Language Coordinators to facilitate the acquisition of their textbooks.

United Nations Radio

64. The launch of the United Nations Radio live broadcast pilot project in August 2000 has considerably expanded multilingualism in radio programming. The live programmes are broadcast daily in the six official languages of the Organization, targeting audiences in all regions of the world.

65. In addition to the six official languages, United Nations Radio continues to produce news and feature programmes in nine non-official languages, namely, Bangla, Dutch, French Creole, Hindi, Indonesian, Kiswahili, Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu.

66. Shortly after broadcast in the six official languages and Portuguese, news programmes are digitized in Real Media and MP3 formats and made available for Internet streaming, downloading and distribution to partner stations. A number of weekly feature programmes in Chinese, English, French and Russian are also encoded and distributed regularly via the Internet.

United Nations Television

67. The productions of United Nations Television, including both weekly features and documentaries, are also adapted in the official languages for worldwide dissemination. Clips of the *UN in Action* series and promotional highlights of the documentaries are regularly posted on the United Nations web site. As the web infrastructure develops, every effort will be made to provide more high-quality photographs and audio and video clips in various official languages. Navigation and display features will be continually enhanced to keep pace with this rapidly evolving technology.

Guided tours

68. Visitors to United Nations Headquarters are offered a variety of services, including guided tours and briefing programmes in all the official languages as well as 14 other languages. Tours conducted in languages other than English constitute 22 per cent of the total number of tours offered. Information about the guided tour is available on the United Nations web site in all the official languages and, in abbreviated form, in German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Swedish. Recorded information on guided tours is available in nine different languages. In addition, briefing programmes are available upon request in both official and other languages.

Dag Hammarskjöld Library

69. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is placing increasing emphasis on multilingualism in its products and services, within available resources. It continues to maintain the archival collection of United Nations documents and publications in all languages and formats of issuance. Also acquired, more selectively, in one or both working languages, are documents and publications of specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

70. During the current biennium, efforts were made to increase acquisition of non-United Nations materials in languages other than English, particularly French. With respect to online databases, access is now provided to content in 22 languages, with emphasis on the six official languages. Furthermore, the Library provides dedicated Internet workstations for patron

use, equipped with utility programmes for browsing various scripts, including Arabic and Chinese.

71. The Library is making particular efforts to produce its new web offerings in at least three languages (English, French and Spanish) as well as in other official languages as feasible. As time and resources permit, older pages are translated, with current emphasis on the heavily textual *United Nations Documentation: Research Guide* (http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide). The Guide is now posted in Arabic, English, French and Russian, with Chinese and Spanish versions due by January 2002. Its expanded availability will assist researchers worldwide in working independently with United Nations documents.

72. The Library has also extended its digitization programme for United Nations documents to official languages other than English. To date, documents of the General Assembly in Arabic, French and Spanish, from the forty-sixth session onwards, have been scanned and transmitted to the Official Document System. Furthermore, the *UNBIS Thesaurus* file has been completed in Arabic, Chinese and Russian, which will permit searching of ODS by subject descriptors in these languages, as well as in English, French and Spanish.

73. As part of its ongoing outreach to civil society and Member States, the Library has continued to conduct regional training seminars for depository librarians. Four workshops were held, in Moscow, Islamabad, Mexico City and Rabat, in the course of the biennium 2000-2001, financed under the Library's worldwide programme for developing countries and countries in transition, and conducted in Russian, English, Spanish and French, respectively.

74. The Library also provides extensive training at Headquarters, covering the management, organization and use of United Nations documentation as well as retrieval of both United Nations and non-United Nations electronic information resources. Whenever there is sufficient demand, individual courses are organized in the relevant languages. For example, visiting depository librarians have received training in Spanish and Japanese, while sessions have been organized in Arabic for the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In addition, ad hoc briefings have been provided in Arabic, French, Russian, Spanish and German.

Action

75. The Department of Public Information will continue to provide its products and services in as many official languages, and non-official languages, as is feasible within the resources allocated to it.

Security and Safety Service

76. The Security and Safety Service of the Secretariat continues its effort to increase the language capacity of its staff. Although security officers are locally recruited in accordance with United Nations regulations, the Security and Safety Service actively seeks qualified candidates who will bring linguistic and cultural diversity to the Service. During recruitment processes, language skills are recruitment criteria.

77. In 2001, security officers from Hungary, Romania and Sri Lanka were recruited. At present, the Safety and Security Service at Headquarters has approximately 200 officers of whom the following numbers are proficient in official languages other than English: Arabic (15), Chinese (1), French (11), Spanish (26), Russian (2). Some officers are also proficient in Creole, German, Hindi, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Serbian and Swedish.

V. Conclusion

78. The furtherance of multilingualism at the United Nations poses many challenges. At present, three priority areas may be identified. The first challenge concerns the need to ensure a more balanced use of working languages within the Secretariat. The second pertains to the use of official languages in documents, and by Member States in their intergovernmental meetings. The third relates to the availability and dissemination of public information material, in particular through the United Nations web site, in all the official languages, or as appropriate.

79. Effective actions to promote multilingualism would require policy guidance from the General Assembly. The promotion of multilingualism would also require concerted efforts by Member States and the Secretariat, and adequate resources, in particular with respect to public information activities.

Notes

[1] Rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

[2] Rule 41 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

[3] Rule 32 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

[4] Rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council.

[5] Article 39 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice.

[6] Resolution 2 (I) of 1 February 1946.

[7] English, French, Portuguese and Spanish are the official languages of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

[8] Applicable to grade levels P-1 to P-5.

[9] Applicable to grade levels D-1 to D-2.

[10] Occasionally, especially during periods of peak activity, the quantity of manuscripts submitted is beyond the processing capacity of the Secretariat for the specific time frame requested. In these cases, a choice must be made between timely, albeit partial, availability and non-issuance or total non-availability. On some occasions, the practical reality has prevailed and a document is issued with the annexes remaining in the languages of submission. The Secretariat is doing everything possible to avoid such occurrences in the future.

[11] Calendar meetings are meetings of intergovernmental or expert United Nations bodies, regardless of the nature of the meetings (formal, informal consultations, etc.). Non-calendar meetings are all other meetings, including mainly meetings of regional groups, other groups of Member States or intergovernmental organizations, and meetings organized by the Secretariat on its own initiative. Non-calendar meetings are provided with conference services on an as-available basis.

[12] See A/56/120/Rev.1.